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CHRIST *the beſt* HUSBAND: *Or an earneſt Invitation to* Young Women *to come and ſee* CHRIST.

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A

SERMON

Preached to a

SOCIETY *of* YOUNG WOMEN, *in* Fetter-Lane.

BY

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PSALM xlv. 10, 11.

Hearken, O Daughter, and conſider, and incline thine Ear: Forget alſo thine own People, and thy Father's Houſe: So ſhall the King greatly deſire thy Beauty; for he is thy Lord, and worſhip thou him.

THIS Pſalm is called the Song of Loves, the moſt high, pure and ſpiritual, the moſt dear and delightful Loves; namely, thoſe which are between the Beloved and his Church, which is his Spouſe; wherein is ſet forth, firſt, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt in Regard of his Majeſty, Power, and Divinity, his Truth, Meekneſs and Equity: And then the Spouſe is ſet forth, in Regard of her Ornaments, Companions, Attendants and Poſterity; and both are ſet forth in Regard of their Comelineſs and Beauty. After a Deſcription is given of Chriſt, an Invitation is made unto his Eſpouſals, of that of the Children of Men, called by the Name of Daughter; and therefore, particularly applicable unto you, my dear Siſters, as being the Daughters of Men, yet not ſo as excluding the Sons of Men.

I ſhall now, therefore, my dear Siſters, conſider the Words, as ſpoken to you in particular, and ſhall obſerve this Doctrine,

That the Lord Jeſus Chriſt doth invite the Daughters of Men to be his Spouſe; and is exceeding deſirous of their Beauty; who, forgetting their People and Father's Houſe, do hearken, conſider and incline to his Invitation, and join themſelves to him in this Relation.

This, my dear Siſters, is the Lord Jeſus Chriſt's Invitation to you to become his Spouſe: And, therefore, from theſe Words I ſhall ſhew

I. How Chriſt doth eſpouſe himſelf unto the Children, but, more eſpecially, unto the Daughters of Men.

The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, my dear Siſters, doth eſpouſe himſelf unto the Children of Men in this World; the publick Solemnization of the Marriage is reſerved until the laſt Day, when his Spouſe ſhall be brought forth to him, in white Robes, and a Raiment of perfect Righteouſneſs, more rich and curious, my dear Siſters, than any of your Needle Work; and the Marriage Feaſt will be kept in his

Father's Houſe, in Heaven, where they ſhall be received into the neareſt and cloſeſt Embracements of his Love. The Marriage Knot is tied here, my dear Siſters, in which is included four Things:

Firſt, Mutual Choice.
Secondly, Mutual Affection.
Thirdly, Mutual Union.
Fourthly, Mutual Obligation.

Firſt, My dear Siſters, there is a mutual Choice, which is not only in Chriſt, as Mediator, but alſo by Chriſt as the eternal Son of God: Yea, God himſelf, notwithſtanding all that the polite *Arians* and *Socinians* ſay to the contrary, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, my dear Siſters, doth chooſe you merely by his free Grace; it is freely of his own Mercy, that he brings you into the Marriage Covenant: You, my dear Siſters, who have ſo grievouſly offended him, yet, my dear Siſters, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath choſen you; you did not, you would not have choſe him; and when once, my dear Siſters, he hath choſen you, then, and not tell then, you make Choice of him for your Lord and Husband.

The Lord Jeſus Chriſt when he firſt comes to you, finds you full of Sin and Pollution; you are deformed, defiled, enſlaved, poor, mi-

miſerable and wretched, very deſpicable and loathſome, by Reaſon of Sin; and he maketh Choice of them, not becauſe of your Holineſs, not becauſe of your Beauty, and of being qualified for them; No, my dear Siſters, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt puts thoſe Qualifications upon you, as may make you meet for his Embracements; and you are drawn to make Choice of this Lord Jeſus Chriſt becauſe he firſt choſe you.

Secondly, In this Eſpouſal, in this Marriage of your's, my dear Siſters, there is a mutual Affection; this doth accompany the Choice. Your Hearts are drawn out after Chriſt; your Souls pant and long for him; you cannot be at Reſt 'till you are engaged to this Jeſus: You, my dear Siſters, cannot be at Reſt without Chriſt; and are ready to cry out continually, None but Chriſt, None but Chriſt: This is the Language of your Hearts, if you are truly ſenſible of your Need of him. The more Acquaintance you have of this Lord Jeſus, the more pleaſed you are with your Choice, the more your Affections, my dear Siſters, are drawn towards him. And where can you place your Affections better than upon that Jeſus who ſhed his Blood for your Sakes? O ſure he deſerves both your Loves and Affections: Go on, go on, my dear Siſters

ſters, that your Affections may grow ſtronger and ſtronger.

Thirdly, Now there is not only mutual Choice, and mutual Affection, but likewiſe mutual Union: And here doth the Marriage lie chiefly, in this Union; Chriſt and Souls are contracted, and the Knot is tied ſo faſt that neither the Men on Earth, how great ſoever they be, nor Devils in Hell, tho' they ſhould combine all their Wrath and Rage, my dear Siſters, together, ſtill they cannot diſſolve it, they cannot untie it; No, my dear Siſters, it is indiſſolvable, for the Union is, by the Spirit, on Chriſt's Part, and by Faith, my dear Siſters, on your's: By the Spirit, Chriſt doth lay hold on you; and by Faith, you do lay hold on him; and thus the Match is made; Chriſt becomes your's, his Perſon, Portion, and all his Benefits are your's; and you, my Siſters, become Chriſt's, your Perſons, your Hearts, and all that you have is reſigned up unto him; and O that they may be more and more ſo.

Fourthly, There is a mutual Obligation too between Chriſt and his Spouſe. Chriſt obligeth himſelf to love you here; he will not, indeed, my dear Siſters, he never will leave you, he will protect you from the Ma-

lice of the *Phariſees* of this Generation, he will provide for you in all Difficulties; he will live with you here, and at laſt he will take you to himſelf, to live with him forever. And you are engaged to him to be loving, loyal, faithful, obedient; and you are to ſtick cloſe to him as long as you live; and then you will find yourſelves to be married to the beſt Advantage, both for Soul and Body, for Time and for Eternity.

II. Chriſt doth invite, my dear Siſters, all of you to be his Spouſe.

And it is on this Account that he ſends forth his Miniſters to preach. It is on this Account that makes me thus come among you; that you would accept of this Invitation, to which I do, in the Name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, call and intreat you to take him on his own Terms. He calls all of you, my Siſters, whether Elder or Younger, whether Married or Unmarried, of higher Degree or of the meaneſt Quality, the pooreſt Servants, yea, the Rabble of this World, as the World calls you, who are willing to be eſpouſed unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt. I ſay, the Poor are as welcome to be Chriſt's Spouſe as thoſe that are Rich. He regardeth not the Rich more than the Poor; he choſe a mean Virgin,

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eſpouſed to a Carpenter, to be his Mother; and he chooſeth and calleth all ſuch to be his Spouſe; then be not diſcouraged, my dear Siſters, at your being deſpiſed in the World; for if you are but loved by Chriſt, and eſpouſed to him, it will be an Over-ſufficiency for all the Trouble that you have met with here.

III. Thoſe who would be eſpouſed unto Chriſt, muſt hearken, conſider, and incline to his Invitation, and forget even their Father's Houſe.

Such as would be eſpouſed unto Chriſt muſt hearken. *Hearken, O Daughter.* Many amongſt you, my Siſters, ſtop their Ears againſt the Calls of the Goſpel; they ſhut their Ears, I ſay, like unto the deaf Adder, which will not hearken unto the Voice of the Charmer, though he charm never ſo wiſely. You will not hearken unto the Invitations of Chriſt; you can hearken unto the Vanities of the World, and be delighted with the Eſpouſals of the World, but never think, or are delighted with the Eſpouſals of Chriſt.

It was by the Ear that the Temptation of Sin was received by the firſt Man, when he departed from God, and by the Ear the Invitation to be Chriſt's Spouſe muſt be received, before

before the Heart will be opened to receive Jeſus Chriſt in this conjugal Relation.

If you would, my dear Siſters, be eſpouſed to Chriſt, you muſt conſider Chriſt's Invitation. It is not a ſlight or bare Hearing of Chriſt's Invitation which will be of any Service to you, or make up the Match between Chriſt and your Souls: No; you muſt receive Chriſt in the Heart; you muſt conſider the Thing itſelf, the Advantages of it, the Difference between Chriſt's Invitations and the Devil's Temptations, or any of the World's Proffers.

Thoſe that would be eſpouſed to Chriſt muſt be inclined to accept of Chriſt's Invitation. *Hearken, O Daughter, conſider and incline thine Ear.* This is to incline your Hearts: You muſt conſent with your Wills; there muſt be a Compliance to the Motion of Chriſt, and you muſt have Deſires after Chriſt, and then your Hearts will ſay, Lord, let us be thy Spouſe, and be thou our Beloved.

You muſt likewiſe forget your Father's Houſe. *Hearken, O Daughter, and conſider, and forget thy Father's Houſe.* You are not here to caſt off all Affections unto natural Relations; but you muſt forget all Relations, ſo as to be ready to forego all their Favours, when it ſtandeth in Competition with that of

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the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and do not let your carnal Friends and Relations hinder you from cloſing and eſpouſing with the Lord Jeſus. I earneſtly beſeech you to ſuffer the Loſs of any Thing, rather than to loſe his Favours; you muſt indeed forget your own People, that is, you muſt forget all your evil Cuſtoms which you have learned in your Father's Houſe, and forſake all your vain Converſation, your reading of Plays, Novels, or Romances; and you muſt keep from learning to ſing the Songs of the Drunkard; for Chriſt, if you are his Spouſe, hath redeemed you.

Such of you, my dear Siſters, as are eſpouſed to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt are very beautiful. I do not mean in reſpect of your Bodies, you may have leſs of external Comelineſs than others, in reſpect of your Bodies, but as to your Souls you will exceed in Beauty, not externally, but internally, not ſo much in the Eyes of Man, as in the Eyes of God; ſuch have the moſt beautiful Image of God inſtamp'd upon them; none in the World, beſide them, have the leaſt Spark of ſpiritual Beauty. Such as are not married to Chriſt are unregenerated, they are not born again, nor brought from Sin unto God, which muſt be done before you be eſpouſed to Chriſt.

And the Lord Jeſus Chriſt deſireth to ſee this Beauty in his Spouſe, for he cries out,

O my Dove, thou art in the Clefts of the Rock, in the ſecret Places of the Stairs, let me ſee thy Countenance, let me hear thy Voice, for ſweet is thy Voice, and thy Countenance is comely. He calleth his Spouſe his Love, being the dear Object of his Love; and he admireth her Lovelineſs; he repeats it twice in one Verſe, *Behold thou art fair, my Love, behold thou art fair.* Thus you ſee he deſcribes their Beauty. And then, my Siſters, we have a wonderful Expreſſion of Chriſt to his Spouſe, *Thou haſt raviſh'd my Heart, my Siſter, my Spouſe, thou haſt raviſh'd my Heart with one of thine Eyes, with one Chain of thy Neck.* Thus you ſee how pleaſed the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is with his Spouſe; and will not you, therefore, my dear Siſters, be eſpouſed unto the Lord Jeſus? I offer Jeſus Chriſt to all of you; if you have been never ſo notorious for Sin, if you have been as great a Harlot as *Mary Magdalen* was, when once you are eſpouſed to Chriſt, you ſhall be forgiven. Therefore be not diſcouraged, at whatever Slights and Contempts the World may paſs upon you, but come and join yourſelves to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and all your Sins ſhall be waſhed away in his Blood; and when once you are eſpouſed to Jeſus, you are disjoyned from Sin, you are born again. You are now, as it were, eſpouſed unto Sin, Sin is your Husband, and

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now you are too fond of it, but when once you are married to Chriſt, when once you are born again, then you may be ſaid to die unto Sin; but till then Sin liveth in your Affections; therefore, my Siſters, give Sin its Death-Wound in your Hearts; you have been called by the Word Time after Time, and it has had no Effect upon you; but when you are eſpouſed unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, then you will be brought to him by his Spirit: You will then lay hold on him by Faith, his Spirit will draw you unto himſelf, he will make you to be willing in the Day of his Power; he will give you Faith in him; Faith is the Hand of the Soul which layeth hold on Chriſt. Therefore, my Siſters, do not reſt contented till you have this Grace of Faith wrought in you with Power; do not be contented till you have received the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Embrace Chriſt in the Arms of your deareſt Love; then you love the Lord Jeſus Chriſt with Sincerity, when you love and eſteem him before Father, Mother, or all the Delights and Pleaſures of this Life; but if, my dear Siſters, you do delight in any Thing that this World can produce, more than in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, you have no true Love to him.

If you are eſpouſed to Chriſt, you have Acquaintance and Converſe with him; you will

will endeavour to promote his Intereſt, and advance his Name in the World; then, when others are going to the polite and faſhionable Diverſions of Life, you are labouring to bring Honour to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; you are commending your Beloved above all other Beloveds, and endeavour to bring others into Love to him. Can you, my dear Siſters, who are now aſſembled to worſhip God, ſhew ſuch Evidence of your Eſpouſals unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt? O! how joyful, how comfortable an Eſtate is this! Surely this is a Marriage worth ſeeking after; this, my Siſters, is the only deſirable Marriage, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the only Lover that is worth ſeeking after.

Now, my dear Siſters, I ſhall ſpeak a few Words to thoſe of you who have not yet eſpouſed yourſelves to the Lord Jeſus. It is a great Sin, and ſurely you highly affront the Lord that bought you. It is likewiſe your Folly to refuſe and neglect the gracious Proffers of being the Spouſe of Chriſt; hereby you forfeit all that Love which he would beſtow upon you; hereby you chooſe Rags before Robes, Droſs before Gold, Pebbles before Jewels, Guilt before a Pardon, Wounds before Healing, Defilement before Cleanſing, Deformity before Comelineſs, Trouble before Peace,

Peace, Slavery before Liberty, the Service of the Devil before the Service of Chriſt. Hereby you chooſe Diſhonour before a Crown, Death before Life, Hell before Heaven, eternal Miſery and Torment before everlaſting Joy and Glory. And need there a farther Evidence of your Folly and Madneſs in refuſing and neglecting Chriſt to be your Spouſe.

My dear Siſters, I ſhould exceed the Limits of your Time, ſhould I particularize all the Advantages which you would obtain by being eſpouſed to the Lord Jeſus. This is your Wiſdom; they are fooliſh Virgins which refuſe; but you are the wiſe Virgins who have accepted of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and have diſpoſed of yourſelves unto him; you have made the wiſeſt Choice, and however the blind World may deem you Fools, and deſpiſe you as being methodically mad, yet, my Siſters, you are wiſe in the Eſteem of God, and will, one Day, appear ſo in the Eſteem of them that now deſpiſe you. It is your Glory that you are eſpouſed unto the Lord Jeſus; and therefore glory in your Eſpouſal; glory not in yourſelves, but in the Lord who hath thus freely and graciouſly beſtowed theſe Favours upon you. It is your Safety to be eſpouſed unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, he will protect and defend you even from Sin and Satan, and eternal Ruin; and therefore thus far you

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are ſafe; he hath a Regard for you in Times of Danger from Men, and theſe Times of Danger ſeem to be haſtning; it is now ariſing as a black Cloud no bigger than a Man's Hand, and by and by it will overſpread the Heavens, and when it is full it will burſt; and therefore, if you are eſpouſed to Chriſt, you are ſafe.

Now, my dear Siſters, I ſhall conclude with an earneſt Exhortation to High and Low, Rich and Poor, one with another, to be eſpouſed unto Chriſt.

And here I ſhall ſpeak to thoſe of you who are not as yet eſpouſed unto Chriſt, and alſo to thoſe that are already eſpouſed.

I ſhall now ſpeak unto you, young Women, who are not yet eſpouſed unto Chriſt, whom, in an eſpecial Manner, I am now preaching to. It may be to ſatisfy your Curioſity that has brought many of you here; though, perhaps, this may be the Time when you ſhall be brought home to embrace the Lord Jeſus, and be eſpouſed to him. And O, that I may perſuade you, by his Spirit, to eſpouſe yourſelves unto the Lord of Life.

And if you are but brought to cloſe with the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, I ſhall attain my End, and then both you and I ſhall rejoice that I preached this Sermon to you.

Come

Come Virgins, will you give me Leave to be a Suitor unto you, not in my Name, but in the Name of the Lord? Oh! may I prevail with you for your Affections, and perſuade you to give them unto Chriſt? May I be inſtrumental of bringing your Souls to Chriſt! May I be inſtrumental to join you and Chriſt together this Day?

Be not coy, as ſome of you poſſibly are in other Loves: Modeſty and the Virgin Bluſh may very well become you when Motions of another kind are made unto you; but here Coyneſs is Folly, and Backwardneſs to accept of this Motion is Shame: You have ten Thouſand times more Reaſon to bluſh at the Refuſal of Chriſt for your Beloved, than at the Acceptance; when otherwiſe the Devil and Sin would raviſh your Virgin Affections. Never had you a better Motion made to you; never was ſuch a Match proffered to you as this of being matched and eſpouſed unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Conſider who the Lord Jeſus is, whom you are invited to eſpouſe yourſelves unto; he is the beſt Husband; there is none comparable to Jeſus Chriſt.

Do you deſire one that is great? He is of the higheſt Dignity, he is the Glory of Heaven, the Darling of Eternity, admired by Angels, dreaded by Devils, and adored by Saints.

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As for you to be eſpouſed to ſo great a King, what Honour will you have by this Eſpouſal?

Do you deſire one that is Rich? None is comparable to Chriſt, the Fulneſs of Earth belonging to him. If you be eſpouſed to Chriſt, you ſhall ſhare in his unſearchable Riches; you ſhall receive his Fulneſs, even Grace for Grace here, and then you ſhall hereafter be admitted to Glory, and ſhall live with this Jeſus to all Eternity.

Do you deſire one that is Wiſe? There is none comparable to Chriſt for Wiſdom. His Knowledge is infinite, and his Wiſdom is correſpondent thereto. And if you are eſpouſed to Chriſt, he will guide and counſel you, and make you wiſe unto Salvation.

Do you deſire one that is potent, who may defend you againſt your Enemies, and all the Reſults and Reproaches of the *Phariſees* of this Generation? There is none that can equal Chriſt in Power; for the Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath all Power.

Do you deſire one that is Good? There is none like unto Chriſt in this Regard; others may have ſome Goodneſs, but it is imperfect; Chriſt's Goodneſs is compleat and perfect, he is full of Goodneſs, and in him dwelleth no Evil.

Do you deſire one that is beautiful? His Eyes are moſt ſparkling, his Looks and Glances

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of Love are raviſhing, his Smiles are moſt delightful and refreſhing unto the Soul: Chriſt is the moſt lovely Perſon of all others in the World; he will waſh you in the Bath from all Defilements.

Do you deſire one that can love you? None can love you like Chriſt: His Love, my dear Siſters, is incomprehenſible; his Love paſſeth all other Loves: The Love of the Lord Jeſus is firſt, without Beginning; his Love is free without any Motive; his Love is great without any Meaſure; his Love is conſtant without any Change, and his Love is everlaſting without any End.

It was the Love of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, my dear Siſters, which brought him down from Heaven; which veiled his Divinity in a human Soul and Body; for he is God over all bleſſed forever: It was Love that made him ſubject to Hunger, Thirſt and Sorrow; he was humbled, even unto Death for you, my dear Siſters, for you who are eſpouſed to him, he underwent the painful, ſhameful and ignominious Death of the Croſs: And can you, my Siſters, hear this and not be concerned to think that the bleſſed Jeſus underwent all this for ſuch ſinful Creatures as you and I are? It was his Love that brought him from Heaven, and it was Love that made him ſubject to Hunger, Thirſt and Sorrow:

And when out of Love he had finiſhed the Redemption on Earth, as to what was needful for Satisfaction.

It was his Love that carried him back to Heaven, where he was before, that he might make Application of what he had purchaſed, that there he might make Interceſſion for thoſe whom he had redeemed, and prepare a Place for them, even glorious Manſions with himſelf, in the Houſe not made with Hands, which is eternal in the Heavens. It is out of Love that he ſendeth ſuch Tokens to his People from Heaven to Earth, which he conveyeth through his Ordinances, by his Spirit unto them. Surely than none is ſo deſervable as the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for you to eſpouſe yourſelves unto: If you be eſpouſed unto Chriſt he is your's, all that he is, all that he hath; you ſhall have his Heart, and ſhare in the choiceſt Expreſſions of his deareſt Love.

The Lord Jeſus Chriſt, my dear Siſters, doth beſeech you to be his Spouſe. We Miniſters have a Commiſſion from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt to invite you, in his Name, unto this Thing; and Chriſt's Invitations are real; general; frequent; earneſt; free. Chriſt's Invitations of you, to be his Spouſe, are real; and as the Thing is real, ſo you, my dear Siſters, are really invited unto it.

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The Lord doth not mock and diſſemble with you as ſome pretending Lovers, who diſſemble Love unto Virgins, until they have gained Affections, and then falſely and baſely relinquiſh them, never really intending either to eſpouſe, or marry them: But the Lord doth really intend the Thing, in his Invitations of you; he never caſt off any whoſe Conſent and Affections he had gained. Again,

Chriſt's Invitations of you, my dear Siſters, are general.

All of you are invited, my dear Siſters; none of you are excluded; all Sorts of Sinners are invited; the moſt vile and abominable Sinners, the moſt notorious Tranſgreſſors are invited to be Chriſt's Spouſe, and ſhall be as welcome as any unto the Embracements of his Love.

Chriſt's Invitation of you are frequent: Jeſus Chriſt calls on you frequently; doth invite you; he hath waited on you Time after Time, one Year after another; and he doth now invite you, by me this Day, to come unto him. Do not, my dear Siſters, ſlight this Invitation, but receive it with Joy and Thankfulneſs. Come, I beſeech you, to this Jeſus, who thus invites you to be his Spouſe. Again,

Chriſt's Invitations to be his Spouſe are earneſt; he doth call upon you, and not only

call but call earneſtly too; yea, he uſeth many Arguments with you: He will preſs you to come unto him; he is loth to take any Denial from you; he knocks and knocks hard at the Door of your Hearts for Entertainment: And ſurely you will not deny the Lord of Life and Glory who died for you, and gave himſelf for you: O my dear Siſters, let this be the Evening of your Eſpouſals to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

He invites you freely to be his Spouſe for all his Invitations are free; he doth not expect a Portion with you, as the Worldly Lovers do; he wants nothing of you; Nay, you muſt have nothing if you be eſpouſed unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt: If you be poor, miſerable, blind, naked, Jeſus Chriſt will ſupply all theſe Defects of his own free Mercy; he will fill and ſupply you with all Things out of his Treaſury; he will make you meet for himſelf; he will prepare you to live with him forever.

Conſider if you be once eſpouſed unto Chriſt, if once joined in this Relation, you ſhall never be ſeparate from him; neither Men nor Devils ſhall be able to ſeparate you: None, none, ſhall disjoin you; and when Death doth break all other conjugal Bonds, it ſhall not break the conjugal Bond between you and Chriſt, but bring you unto the moſt full and everlaſting Poſſeſſion of your Beloved.

And

And what do you now ſay, young Women? Shall I have a Grant for my Maſter, or be ſent away with a Repulſe and Refuſal; No, I cannot carry ſuch a Meſſage to my Maſter; No, I hope better Things of you, my Siſters, and Things which accompany Salvation: Methinks by this Time ye ſhould begin to have a Mind unto Jeſus Chriſt; you look as if you did deſire; you hearken as if you would conſent. What do you ſay? Shall the Match be made up this Evening between Chriſt and your Souls? O that I may be inſtrumental in joining your Hands, or rather your Hearts together: O that I may be inſtrumental to tie that Knot, which never can be untied.

Some marry in haſte, and repent at Leiſure; but if you were once eſpouſed unto Jeſus Chriſt, you would never repent, nothing would grieve you, but that you were not joyned to him ſooner; and you would not be diſjoined again for all the World.

Shall this be the Day of your Eſpouſals? Some of you have ſtayed a long Time: And will you defer any longer? If you will not now, perhaps you may never have another Opportunity; this may be the laſt Time of asking; and, therefore, it is dangerous to refuſe: Some of you are very young, too young for other Eſpouſals; but none of you, my dear

dear Sisters, are too young for to be espoused unto the Lord Jesus Christ: In other Espousals you must have the Consent of your Parents; but at this you are at your own Disposal; you may give and ought to match yourselves to Christ, whether Parents do consent or not.

But if any of you should ask, What you must do that you may be espoused unto Christ? You must be sensible of your Need and of your being espoused to him; and until you are sensible of your Need of the Lord Jesus Christ, you cannot be espoused to him; you must have Desires after this Jesus, and seek unto him for an Intereſt in him; you must cry nightly unto him to espouse you to himself: Put off the Filthyness of Sin and all its Defilements; and then, my Sisters, put on the white Raiment, and clean Garments, which Christ hath provided for you, the Robes of his Righteousness; In these Garments you shall be beautiful; and in these Garments you shall be accepted: You must have the Wedding-Garment on; you must put off all your own good Works, for they will be but a Means to keep you from Christ; No, you must come as not having your own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but you must have the Righteousness of Christ. Therefore, come unto the Lord Jesus Christ, and he will give it to you; he will not send you away without it, therefore,

therefore, receive him upon his own Terms, and he is your's forever: O devote yourſelves to him Soul and Body, and all to be his forever; and then Chriſt will be your's, and you will be his forever; and then happy, happy you, that ever you were born! But if any of you, die before this Eſpouſal unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, then woe, woe, unto you that ever you had a Being in Life; but if you go to Chriſt you ſhall be eſpouſed unto the Lord Jeſus, if your Sins have been never ſo great, yea, the Blood of Chriſt will cleanſe you from them; the Marriage Covenant between Chriſt and your Souls will diſſolve all your Sins; you will then be weary of your old Ways, for all Things will become new in your Souls.

Now my dear Siſters, I ſhall conclude by juſt ſpeaking a Word or two to thoſe of you, who are already eſpouſed unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

O admire, admire the rich and free Grace, which hath brought you to this relation; is not this an Inſtance of the greateſt of Love, that you ſhould be the Spouſe of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt? You that had no Beauty, you that had no Comelineſs, that was full of Sin, that he ſhould embrace ſuch Sinks of Sin as you and I are; that we ſhould be taken into the Embracements of this Lord Jeſus: O infinite

con-

condeſcending Kindneſs! O amazing Love! Reverence, Reverence, I beſeech you, my dear Siſters, this Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

He is your Lord, and you muſt reverence him, love and be faithful unto him, be ſubject unto him, and careful to pleaſe him in every Thing; endeavour to keep up a daily Communion with him; Look, long and prepare for Chriſt's ſecond Appearance, when the Nuptials between you ſhall be ſolemnized, and you after to live with him forever, in Manſions of everlaſting Joys, where you ſhall live and love with this King of Glory forever and ever.

I know not how, my dear Siſters, to conclude; methinks I could ſpeak to you till Midnight, if it would bring you unto the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and make you be eſpouſed to him, for indeed, my Siſters, that will be the Eſpouſal which will turn to the greateſt Advantage, as you will find by Experience, if you will but make the Trial; and that you may do ſo, my Prayers and my conſtant Endeavours ſhall be uſed.

I will, my dear Siſters, ſpend and be ſpent for you, and by the Aſſiſtance of God, will preſerve in this that. I have begun, and as many of you may have Opportunity ſome Evening in the Week, without breaking in on the Buſineſs of Life; I ſhall therefore, my

Siſters,

Siſters, either be here, or where you ſhall be publickly acquainted with: I will not mind being reproached or deſpiſed: The Men of this World may uſe what Language they pleaſe; they may ſay I am a Methodiſt. Indeed, my Siſters, I am reſolved, by the Grace of God, to uſe all Methods I can, to pluck you from Satan, that you may be as Brands pluck'd from the burning Fire: This ſhall be my Method, which I hope will be the Means of effectually ſaving your precious and immortal Souls.

And if, my dear Siſters, I am the Inſtrument of this, I ſhall rejoice, yea, and I will rejoice in Spight of what Men, or Devils, can ſay or do to the contrary: And may the Lord Jeſus Chriſt direct me, and aſſiſt me at all Times, to act what will be moſt for his Glory, and the Welfare of your Souls: And may you all ſay a hearty *Amen* thereto.

C *Now the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is God over all, bleſſed forever, aſſiſt and watch over you, keep you from all Evil, from Sin here, and preſent you before his Father faultleſs at the great Day of Account, to this Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Father, and the bleſſed Spirit, three Perſons and but one immortal, eternal and inviſible God, be aſcribed all Honour,*

 Power,

Power, Glory, Might, Majeſty and Dominion, now, henceforth, and forevermore. Amen, Amen.

The Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Love of God, and the Fellowſhip of the Holy Ghoſt be with you all, to comfort under, and deliver you from Tribulation; to preſerve you to your reſpective Places of Abode; and when there, to keep you in his Fear, that you may live to his Glory; that to live may be Chriſt's, and to die be your eternal Gain; ſo that you may live with him through eternal Ages, and ſing Hallelujahs to him forever and ever. Amen.

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